

Sanity- A Danny Phantom fanfic

by GhostlyPotato

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Summary: What happens when Danny starts seeing things that aren't there? I do not own Danny Phantom.

1. Chapter 1

****This is a story I used to have on my Wattpad account before I stopped using Wattpad and, therefore, stopped writing this story. Due to the guilt of people waiting years for an update, only to find I am no longer writing it, I have decided to finish it. I'm going to rewrite each chapter to fix mistakes I have made and to change it to the writing style I have now. For those of you who are coming from Wattpad, welcome back. For those who are reading this for the first time, welcome. I hope you enjoy.****

* * *

><p>It was a cold, crisp day in Amity Park. Colorful leaves had fallen off the trees and onto the ground below. Danny was walking home from school, a soft wind blowing through his dark hair. He sighed in content. It wasn't often that Danny had a slow day where he could just enjoy himself instead of fighting ghosts.<p>

Even though there hadn't been any ghosts, Danny couldn't help but be suspicious as to why. It had almost become routine for a ghost to show up each day, so where were they? He wondered if perhaps they were plotting something. Perhaps taking a break? The thought boggled Danny's mind as he walked home.

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><p>Walking through the front door of his home, Danny was greeted with an explosion, one he knew came from the basement. "Not again!" Jack exclaimed.<p>

Danny rolled his eyes as he shut the door behind him, _So much for a

peaceful day. _He thought with a tinge of bitterness.

Danny made his way to the kitchen where, when he arrived, saw smoke rising from the doorway leading to the basement. He set his backpack down with a shake of the head. Instead of getting something to eat, something Danny had been thinking about his entire walk home, he headed downstairs, following the smoke.

Jack had listened to Danny's footsteps as he walked down the stairs. He turned to his son when Danny made it to the doorway. "Danny! You're home!" Jack announced. "Your mother and I have been testing out my new invention!"

"_Our _new invention." Maddie corrected. She rubbed her chin as she looked back down at the hunk of metal in front of her. "But it just doesn't seem to work." She shrugged and tossed the thought aside for the moment to give Danny her full attention. "So, how was your day at school, sweetie?"

Danny suddenly wished he had never come downstairs. "It was good." _No better than any other day_, he thought.

"No one giving you any trouble?" Jack asked, voice booming as usual.

"Nope." Danny responded. There was no point in bringing up Dash, he was used to it by now. Danny didn't see this conversation going anywhere else so he decided to leave. His foot had just landed on the first step when his father stopped him.

"Oh, Danny, I almost forgot! Vladdy is having a little get together. We're leaving tomorrow!" Jack informed.

Danny felt his mouth go dry. "Oh, well, I'm so excited." The sarcasm was practically dripping from his voice. Danny all but stomped up the stairs and to his room.

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><p>As Danny did his best to refrain from slamming the bedroom door behind him, he pulled out his phone and dialed Sam and Tucker.<p>

"What!?" Sam and Tucker exclaimed in unison. Danny had just told what was going on.

"Dude, you can't go. Just tell your folks you're sick or something." Tucker suggested.

"I can't," Danny responded, thinking back to his parent's strange methods. "They'll just think something's upâ€| or worse."

Sam agreed with Danny. "He's right. Besides, if Danny doesn't go, his dad will probably be in danger."

Tucker hadn't thought of that. "That's true. But what are you supposed to do, Danny? He's your arch nemesis and this has evil plan written all over it."

"I know," Danny said. "I know. I guess I'll just have to sleep with

one eye opened." Danny pinched the bridge of his nose. "Listen, I'll call you guys back later."

"Okay, Danny. Good luck." Sam said.

"Yeah, man. Good luck." Tucker said.

* * *

><p>When Jazz arrived home later that day, it took no more than three minutes for her to burst into Danny's room exclaiming, "We're going to Vlad's!?"<p>

"Yup." Danny sighed, looking up from his English homework.

Jazz felt both loathe and worry. "What are we going to do?"

Danny shrugged halfheartedly. "Stick it out. See what happens. It's all we can do."

Jazz turned and walked out of the room with hunched shoulders mumbling, "I guess I'll go pack the ghost weapons."

* * *

><p>Waking up at four a.m., the morning was nothing short of groggy. Outside, obviously, was still dark. It was sprinkling softly and a breeze was blowing through the trees. Danny was brushing his teeth. Jazz was brushing her hair. "You ready?" She asked. The circles under her eyes just as dark as the circles under Danny's eyes.<p>

Danny washed off his toothbrush and rinsed his mouth. "No." He responded.

Jazz responded, "Me neither."

* * *

><p>Sometime during the ride, Jazz managed to fall back asleep. Danny, on the other hand, didn't. His hand rested on his chin as he stared out the window. Maddie caught Danny's glum expression in the rearview mirror. "Is something wrong, dear?"<p>

"Nothing. Everything's peachy." Danny responded, not a lick of humor in his voice.

"Did we do something to upset you?" She asked.

Danny finally tore his eyes from the window to look at his mom. "No, I'm just tired." He said with a sigh.

"How about you try and get some rest then. It's still a while until we arrive." Maddie suggested, features softening. Danny grunted in response, eyes trailing back to the window.

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><p>Well into the afternoon, the rain had long ago ceased. Danny had ended up falling asleep but when he awoke, he found he felt even less rested than before. Everyone exited the Assault Vehicle to meet Vlad

at the front steps of his mansion. "Aw, Maddie, Daniel, Jasmine. How nice to see you all again." He held out his arms in greeting as they entered the mansion.<p>

This is going to go great. Thought Danny sarcastically.

2. Chapter 2

Danny looked around the Packers themed mansion as he awaited to be shown his room. Jazz sidestepped next to Danny as inconspicuously as she could. "Don't you think Vlad's acting a little suspicious?"

Danny shrugged his sagging shoulders. "I always think he's acting suspicious."

In his most polite manner, Vlad gestured to the stairs. "Jazz, Danny, if you two would be as kind as to follow me, I'll show you both to your rooms." Reluctantly, Danny and Jazz followed Vlad up the marble staircase.

Once reaching the top, Vlad gestured to the array of doors leading down the long corridor. "Go ahead and choose the room you will feel most comfortable in." He chirped.

While Jazz found herself choosing the third door on the right, Danny stayed put, scowling at Vlad. "Anything wrong, Little Badger?" Vlad asked. Danny's eye twitched.

"I don't know what you're planning, Plasmius, but I _am_ going to put a stop to it." Danny proclaimed.

Vlad feigned innocence. "Daniel, I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about. I simply wanted a small get together."

"Yeah," Danny responded dryly. "Right." He didn't take his eyes off of Vlad as he entered the bedroom directly across from Jazz's.

Danny closed the large, wooden door with a disgruntled sigh. "What is he planning?" He mumbled to himself as he as threw his overnight bag onto the dresser, no intent on unpacking it. Danny pulled out his phone as he let himself fall onto the queen sized bed.

"Danny?" Sam answered.

"Hey." Danny responded. Sam noticed he sounded tired. Tucker noticed too.

"So," Tucker said. "What's the update?"

"Weird," Danny said. "He was acting all innocent, even when we were alone."

Sam agreed. "That is weird. Do you know what he's planning?"

Danny rolled his eyes. "Oh, I don't knowâ€¦ Kill Jack, marry Maddie, and have Jazz and me as his children."

Tucker said, "Well, make sure to keep us updated, man. Who knows

what's going through that Fruitloop's head?"

"Yeah," Danny said. "I will. Listen, I gotta go. My parents probably want me back downstairs."

"Good luck, man." Tucker said.

"Yeah, good luck." Said Sam. Danny hung up.

* * *

><p>Dinner was, for lack of a better word, awkward. No one often spoke, the only sounds were the occasional chewing of food or sips of drinks. The dinner provided was turkey surrounded with potatoes and carrots. Cranberries and salad were also side choices. Perhaps halfway or perhaps three quarters into the dinner, Jack decided to pipe up. "So, Vladdy, what have you been up to lately? Working on anything new?"<p>

Only Danny noticed the faint smirk appear upon Vlad's lips. "Why, yes, in fact. I have been working on a new invention."

"Oh?" Maddie joined the conversation. "Why kind of invention?"

Vlad replied, "Just some remedies, nothing too special." Danny could almost gag at how innocent Vlad was making himself look.

"No invention is nothing too special," Boomed Jack. "I have to see it!"

"It isn't quite, how should I say, ready yet." Vlad informed.
"Perhaps another time."

Danny has never felt the urge to strike his parents before, but when Jack responded, "Gotcha, Vladdy! Making sure it's perfect before showing it off. I like your style." Danny felt the need to lean over and slap some sense into his dad. How could his father have such blind support for someone, especially that someone being Vlad?

* * *

><p>After dinner, Danny went back to his room and locked himself in for the rest of the night. He ended up dozing off at around 11:30.<p>

Nobody likes being watched, so when Danny woke up at two in the morning to the feeling of eyes on him, needless to say he felt paranoid. "Who's there?" He demanded. Danny waited two heartbeats for a response but nothing came. "Vlad I swear if that's you, you better show yourself, I'm not in the mood for this." Again, nothing. Danny felt the strange feeling go away and, once more, he felt like he was alone. What was that? He thought, laying, cautiously, back down. It took him two hours to fall back asleep.

* * *

><p>Danny woke up feeling weird the next morning. "What was that all about?" He asked himself as he got dressed. When Danny arrived at the dining room downstairs, he found Jazz sitting at the table, book in one hand, spoon of cereal in the other. "Morning." He mumbled,

grabbing a bowl and making himself a bowl of cereal.<p>

"Morning." Jazz look up from her book. "Sleep well?"

"Like a baby." Replied Danny, feeling less rested than an afternoon nap.

Jazz noticed the circles under Danny's eyes. "Oh." She said. "Hey, did you wake up sometime last night? I thought I heard rusting in your room."

"Yeah, Iâ€¦ I woke up last night. Just some stupid nightmare." That paranoid feeling came back momentarily, but it left as quickly as it came.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Jazz asked. Honestly, fighting ghosts all the time, she was surprised he didn't have more nightmares.

Danny shook his head. "No, it's fine. There's nothing to talk about." Jazz hummed and went back to her book. Even if there was something to talk about, she knew Danny would be stubborn about saying anything he didn't want to say. Normally she'd press on, but this was something trivial so she decided to just leave it. She knew he'd come to her if he changed his mind.

* * *

><p>When it was noon, and everyone was sitting at the table, Vlad stood to make an announcement. "May I have your attention? I have scheduled some fun activities for us to do today." Danny couldn't help but scoff under his breath. "Today I was thinking we could go to the museum of Wisconsin history, then go out to an exquisite restaurant for lunch, and end the day with VIP seats to the Packers game."<p>

"Sounds like a lovely day." Maddie smiled.

Jack agreed. "Yeah, and I can't wait for lunch! What do you think kids?"

"Sounds likeâ€¦ fun." Jazz said stiffly. "Danny, doesn't it sound like fun?"

Danny was scowling at Vlad, whom of which acted oblivious to it. "Terrific." Danny gritted.

* * *

><p>Fifteen minutes and a packed limo later, they were on their way to the museum. As they drove, the paranoia that gripped Danny earlier made an abrupt return. It felt worse than last time. It felt like something was watching him, something evil. Multiple times Danny glanced at Vlad, thinking it must be him watching, but each time he looked, he saw Vlad staring with Danny out of his line of sight.<p>

When they arrived at the museum, Danny was glad to be out of the car. They received their passes and entered the first exhibit. As they watched the tour guide give a presentation on the first mayor of the

city, Jazz picked up on Danny's paranoia. She put a hand on Danny's shoulder and he jumped. "Are you okay, Danny?" She asked.

"Yeah. I'm fine. Why wouldn't I be?" Jazz frowned. He defiantly seemed on edge. She knew he was lying. But just like earlier, she decided to leave it. Jazz knew if Danny wanted to talk her, he'd know he'd be able to.

The rest of the day boring. Jazz noticed that as the day progressed, Danny became more and more paranoid. By the time it was the car ride home Danny was, to say the least, a mess. His hair was messy from running his fingers through it so much, and his shirt was wrinkled from messing with it all day. "Well, I, for one, thought that was a glorious day!" Vlad exclaimed as they arrived home.

"Agreed, Vladdy man!" Bellowed Jack. "And the restaurant was the best part of it."

Maddie nodded. "I happened to find the museum very interesting. What did you think, kids?"

"The museum was nice." Jazz agreed. "Danny?" Danny, for his part, was completely zoned out. His eyes were glossed over as he stared at nothing. "Danny?" Jazz repeated.

Danny jumped, then, realizing all eyes were on him, answered the question, taking a moment to register what exactly the question was. "Oh, uh, the game was good."

"Is everything all right, dear?" Maddie asked.

"Everything's fine. I just didn't get very much sleep last night. I think I'm going to go to bed early." With those last words, Danny sprinted upstairs.

Danny slammed the door shut behind him and, for good measure, locked it. He began to pace as his brain worked overtime with all the questions he had. _Why am I acting like this? What's going on? Is someone watching me?_ Danny looked behind him. No one. He pulled out his phone and dialed Sam.

"Hey, Danny. How's everything going?" Sam answered.

"Sam!" Danny yelled. He didn't mean to yell but his mind wasn't quite caught up with his mouth yet.

Sam realized something was terribly wrong. "What's going on?" She asked. "Are you okay?"

"I don't know. I've been paranoid all day. It feels like someone's watching me but there's no one there. I don't know what's going on." He blurted.

Sam was really worried now. "Calm down, Danny. Take a deep breath. Now, when did this all start?"

Danny took a deep breath and calmed himself down because Sam was right, he needed to calm down. "It really started around noon when we were in the car. Just out of the blue."

"What do you mean _really_ started?" Sam asked.

Again, Danny ran his fingers through his hair. "Well it happened last night, but only for a few minutes."

Sam nodded on the other line. "Did anything weird happen before all this?"

"No!" Danny yelled desperately. "That's the part I don't get. Not one strange thing has happened. It's been totally normal, I don't know what's going on."

Sam was stumped. She hated feeling useless, especially when it was something wrong with Danny. "Okay," She thought out her words slowly. "How about you get some rest, then call me in the morning. Let your mind rest, I don't want you pushing yourself too hard. Okay?"

Danny took a deep breath and sighed. "Okay."

"I'm sorry there's nothing else I can do." Sam said remorsefully.

"Don't say that, it's not your fault. Besides, you're probably right, I just need some rest. I'll talk to you later."

"Talk to you later. Goodnight."

Danny hung up the phone. He did feel a little better after talking to Sam. After getting in his pajamas, he went to bed.

* * *

><p>Eyes. A pair of evil, red eyes. They glowed through the darkness as a malicious laugh echoed. "I'm still here. I still exist. Which means you still turn into me."<p>

Danny woke with a start. "No." He whispered as he put his face in his hands.

3. Chapter 3

Despite tossing and turning all night, Danny could not fall back asleep. So at 7:30 in the morning, when Danny heard Jazz leave her room, he decided to get up to. As Danny was pulling his shirt over his head, the foreboding paranoia filled his mind again. "No." He whispered. He didn't want to deal with this again, he couldn't. Not after yesterday. But as Danny left his room, somewhere in his subconscious he knew it was just the beginning.

Danny's hand slid across the cold railing as he walked downstairs. When he got to the dining room, he saw Jazz in the same position as yesterday; book in one hand, spoon of cereal in the other. Jazz noticed Danny enter the room. "You're just like all the other ghosts, you're bound to turn evil."

Danny stopped in his tracks. He felt a cold sweat run down his back. "W-what?" He stuttered. Because no, please, not Jazz. Anyone but Jazz.

Jazz narrowed her eyes. "I said good morning. Are you feeling any better?" Despite repeating her question, Danny's demeanor answered it for her.

Danny felt his shoulders relax. "Yeah. Yes. I'm feeling much better." The skepticism in Jazz's eyes didn't go unnoticed by Danny. To be frank, he didn't blame her; not even he believed the lie he just told.

As Danny pulled out a chair and sat down, Jazz frowned. She kept her voice calm and even as she said, "Tell me what's going on, Danny. You're worrying me."

Danny took a deep breath and let it out, "I guess I'm just worried about Amity Park. Who knows what's going on while I'm not there?"

"I'm sure it's fine. Sam and Tucker have a good handle on it." Jazz wasn't stupid, she knew Danny was lying, but she decided to play along anyway.

"Yeah," Replied Danny. "You're right. Thanks."

"Anytime, Little Brother."

As Danny leaned back in his chair resolutely, Maddie came downstairs. "I know you're a ghost, Danny."

Danny immediately snapped back up. "What?" There was a tint of desperation in his voice.

"I said, good morning, sweetie." Maddie smiled.

"Oh," Danny responded. "Right. Good morning, Mom." Jazz frowned as she watched Danny's erratic behavior. Something was seriously wrong and she needed to get to the bottom of it.

Maddie asked, "You kids ready to go home today? I know I am. The beds here are nice, but I miss my own."

"I know I am." Jazz replied. "What about you, Danny?"

Staring straight ahead of him, Danny had a blank, faraway look. Maddie noticed that Danny had the same look on his face yesterday. She wondered what was wrong.

Jazz repeated, "Danny?"

Danny seemingly snapped out of his trance. "Hmm?"

"Oh, never mind." Jazz shook her head.

At around two o'clock, everyone had their stuff packed inside the Assault Vehicle. Danny walked outside with the last of his things. He looked up at the sky, breathing in the fresh air. The day was sunny and bright, but the cold chill in the air hadn't ceased. "Danny." Danny froze, slowly turning around. Because that voice, that familiar, chilling voice was right behind him. But when he turned around, there was no one there. It was his nerves, nothing more. His nerves were making him hear things that weren't there.

"Danny boy, hand me your bag, I'll pack it with the rest!" Yelled Jack from the RV. Danny put the voice he thought he just heard in the back of his mind and walked to his dad, handing him his bag.

"It was so nice of all of you to come over, it was a lovely weekend." Said Vlad. "I hope we can do this again soon."

"Anytime, Vladdy!" Jack hollered.

Maddie nodded, "Yeah, all you need to do is give us a call."

"And, Danny," Vlad said. "Instead of staying in your room, I hope to see more of you next time."

"Yeah, sure." Danny mumbled as he climbed inside the Assault Vehicle.

Jazz, if only for her parent's sake, tried to be polite. "Bye, Vlad." Vlad waved goodbye as the RV drove away, smile on his face.

Much like last time, Danny stared out the window as they drove home. But unlike last time, he wasn't simply staring to pass time. No, he was watching, examining, making sure there was nothing out there. Maddie noticed Danny's intent gaze through the mirror. "Is everything okay, Danny?"

"Yeah, mom. I'm fine. Why wouldn't I be?" Despite his desperate attempt to look calm, Maddie could see under his façade.

"Just checking." She said, because there was nothing else she could do in the car.

Hours later, just as the sun was setting over the horizon and the clouds threatened rain, they arrived at Amity Park and pulled up to their house. Danny was the first one out of the vehicle. Before his parents could respond, Danny began walking down the sidewalk. He called over his shoulder, "I'm going to go see Sam and Tucker, bye."

Walking up the steps to Sam's house, Danny knocked on the door. Mrs. Manson answered the door, scowling upon seeing it was Danny. "Sam and your other friend are downstairs."

"Thanks." Danny muttered, walking quickly inside and downstairs, where Sam and Tucker were bowling.

"Danny! You're back! What's up, man?" Tucker asked upon noticing Danny's arrival.

Sam was about to greet him too but when she saw the look of dread on his face, she instead asked, "Danny, what's wrong?"

Not once in their entire lives of knowing Danny had they seen such a fearful look on his face. It was almost foreboding. "What did you guys say?" His voice matched his demeanor.

Tucker was worried now too, "Dude, is everything all right?"

"No. Not you guys. Please." Danny whispered.

Sam walked over to Danny, he in turn took a step back. "Danny," Sam urged. "Tell us what's happening."

Most of the fear seemed to drain away. Danny closed his eyes and shook his head. "I can't. I don't know what's going on with me."

"Danny, what do you mean? You're kind of scaring us." Tucker said, glancing from Danny to Sam, then back to Danny.

"I'm paranoid all the time. I'm hearing things that aren't real, and I don't know why this is happening." Danny was doing his absolute best to control his breathing. It was all he could do right now.

Sam knew she needed to remain calm for Danny's sake. "Did something happen at Vlad's? Did he do something to you?"

Danny furiously shook his head. "No. That's what I don't understand. Nothing happened, it was totally normal." Now all three of them were confused. Something wasn't adding up. But before anyone else could comment, Danny's cell phone rang. He picked it up, "H-hello?" He muttered.

On the other line Jazz said, "Mom and Dad want you home. Do you want me to pick you up?"

Danny looked at Sam and Tucker. He didn't want to leave yet. "No, I'llâ€¦ I'll fly home."

Jazz felt reluctant to agree to such a thing in Danny's current condition, but she agreed anyway. "Okay, just be careful."

"I will." Danny promised. He hung up the phone.

Sam shook her head. "Danny, you're not going anywhere by yourself. Not like this."

"Sam's right." Tucker agreed. "At least let us take you home."

"I'll be fine." Danny insisted. "How about I call you guys when I get home?"

Sam sighed resolutely, "Promise?"

"I promise." Danny went ghost and left through the ceiling. As he was flying, the rain that threatened began to fall. The sky was dark and the wind picked up. He continued onâ€¦ That is, until he heard it.

The low, malicious laugh of the one he feared most. "Hello, Danny. Miss me?"

4. Chapter 4

"Hello, Danny. Miss me?"

Danny's eyes widen at the sight before him. "No. No, it can't be you.

You're gone!"

"Oh, but it is me. Did you really think Clockwork could keep me locked up forever? You're more ignorant than I thought." Dan said with a snicker.

Danny knew this wasn't the time to be freaking out. He took a deep breath and a defensive stance and said, "I defeated you once. I can do it again."

Dan laughed. "I'd like to see you try, boy." Danny shot an ecto-blast at Dan who simply put up a shield and faked a yawn. "Is that the best you can do? Well, watch this!" He duplicated himself into four and they each shot an ecto-blast more powerful than Danny's, hitting Danny square in the chest.

Danny went flying back. He hit the side of a brick building, leaving a small crater in it. The thunder cracked and the lightning struck as the rain poured in the darkness. Danny looked around for Dan but he was nowhere to be seen. "Come out and fight!" Danny yelled. He felt a sharp pain in the back of his head and he fell to the ground, changing back in the process.

Dan laughed in the darkness. "Until next time." Danny's vision blurred and his ears rang as he fell unconscious.

* * *

><p>It had been an hour since Jazz had called Danny to come home and she was worried. She decided to call him again. But the longer it rang, the bigger the pit of dread filled Jazz's stomach. What if something bad happened to him? She thought. The rings ended and it went to voicemail. She hung up and decided to call Sam. The phone rang twice before it was picked up.

From the other line, Sam said, "Hello? Jazz?"

"Hi, Sam." Said Jazz. "Is Danny still with you? It's been an hour and he still isn't home."

"No, he's not. Is something wrong? He said he would call when he got home because Tucker and I were worried about him. He came over freaking out and we didn't feel right letting him go alone." Sam explained. She was worried.

Jazz felt her heart drop. "He's been acting jumpy all weekend but wouldn't tell me anything. I'm going to go out and look for him. I'm worried something happened to him."

"My parents have me on high alert since I came home late the other night, so I won't be able to sneak out and help. But call me if you find anything." Said Sam with rising anxiety.

"I will." Jazz hung up her phone and grabbed her car keys off the coffee table in the living room. But as she opened the front door, Jack walked in.

"Jazzykins. Where are you going?" He asked.

Jazz faltered for a moment, trying to think up a decent lie and ended

up settling on a rather bad one. "Oh, Danny got lost walking home so I'm going to go pick him up." She smiled and quickly left before she could give her father a chance to respond.

Jazz ran to her small car and got in. She opened the glove compartment and pulled out the boomerang. She's kept it with her ever since she found out Danny's secret, just for situations like this. Jazz thanked every good thing out there that it was still coordinated to Danny's DNA. She drove out into the road and held the boomerang out the window saying, "I need you to find Danny." The boomerang sprang to life and Jazz threw it, following it with her car.

Jazz drove for no more than five minutes before ending up at an alley. She parked her car on the side of the road, pulling out an umbrella against the rain as she got out. "Danny?" She yelled as the thunder clapped in the sky. "Danny?" She yelled again, looking around. Jazz sighed. Perhaps the boomerang was defective? As she was about to turn in favor of searching somewhere else, through the darkness, she noticed a figure lying on the ground. "Danny!" She yelled, dropping the umbrella, letting it fly away in the wind. Jazz ran to the figure. "Danny?" She sobbed, dropping down next to him.

Danny was lying on his back. Cuts and bruises littered his upper body and face. Behind his head there was a large gash which was bleeding onto the concrete. "Danny?" Jazz asked again, lightly shaking his shoulder. Jazz began to cry when her little brother still didn't respond. But as she sat there, tears falling down her face, she heard a sudden large intake of breath. Jazz looked down and saw Danny's eyes open, scanning his surroundings anxiously. He stopped when his eyes landed on Jazz. "Oh, gosh. Danny!" Jazz untied her headband and carefully lifted Danny up, placing it on his head wound. "What happened to you!?" She yelled.

When Danny's vision cleared, and he regained his senses, he bolted straight up. "Where is he!?" He demanded, ignoring the painful throbbing in his head.

Upon seeing Danny's unpredictable behavior, Jazz regained her composure. "What?"

"Him!" Danny shouted, standing up. "Where'd he go!?"

"Be careful, Danny. You're hurt." Warned Jazz.

"I'm fine. I need to stop him! Going -"

Jazz stopped him. "Danny, the only place you're going is back home! You're hurt and you need to at least get cleaned up, you'll catch a cold in this weather if you haven't already."

"But -"

"No buts, we're going home." Jazz proclaimed. She put Danny's arm around her shoulder and helped him to the car. After she helped Danny in the passenger seat, she got in the driver's seat. "Now, why don't you tell me what happened and I promise I won't tell Mom and Dad." Jazz suggested as she started the car.

Danny sighed. He was holding Jazz's headband against his head wound. "He's back. I was flying home and he showed up. We fought and he knocked me down."

"Danny, you need to be a little more specific. Who's _he_?"

"Me. The bad me. The future me. The one I promised to never become. He escaped." Danny was barely able to comprehend his own words. He wasn't going to lie to himself, he was terrified.

Jazz's eyes widen. She gulped. She remembered him, he was not a force to be reckoned with. And now he's escaped. "Wellâ€¦ what are we going to do?"

Danny shook his head. "I have no idea. All I know is that he needs to be stopped. I'm just wondering why he hasn't taken over the city yet."

"Well, whatever he's planning, it isn't good."

5. Chapter 5

When they had gotten home, Jazz made Danny get cleaned up while she turned on the ghost shield. It wasn't much use though, Danny thought, since Dan's ghostly wail would obliterate it. Though it made Jazz feel safer so he didn't say anything. Jazz walked back to Danny's room and knocked on the door. "Come in." Danny said.

Jazz walked in to see Danny in a fresh pair of clothes, sitting on his bed, his head in his hands. She sat next to him but didn't say any words of comfort. She knew there was nothing she could say to make him feel better. So, instead of comforting words, she said, "Why don't you go to bed? It's been a long day."

Danny shook his head. "I can't. He could come at any time and I have to be ready when he does."

Jazz frowned, "Danny, you're wounded. Even if he does come, you won't have the strength to fight him." She glanced at the bump on his head.

"I heal fast. I'll be fine." Danny insisted.

Jazz had no choice but to use her stern, older sister voice, "Those cuts and bruises might be gone by morning but that head wound surely won't be, Danny."

Danny frowned and looked down at the floor. "How did this happen? I thought I'd never have to think about him again."

Jazz put a hand on his shoulder. "I don't know." She smiled. "But you defeated him once, I know you can do it again."

"Yeah, I guess." Danny didn't feel as enthusiastic as Jazz.

Jazz got up. "Get some sleep, you need it. And don't go sneaking out to try and find him." Danny only nodded at his sister as she walked out of his room, intending to call Sam and Tucker to let them know Danny was all right.

Danny lay back in his bed and stared up at the ceiling. He thought back to the days before he was Danny Phantom. Where he thought his parents were both lunatics for believing in ghosts and the biggest thing he had to worry about was not getting beat up by Dash. He chuckled humorlessly, what a simpler time that was. Danny eventually felt his eyes become heavy and after much, much resistance, he fell asleep.

"I'm still here. I still exist. Which means you still turn into me." Danny looked around the dark room. That sentence kept ringing out, taunting him. He felt a pressure on his head. It wouldn't go away and he wanted it to go away.

A figure appeared from the shadows. "Hello, Danny."

Danny tried to back away but soon realized that his feet wouldn't listen to his brain. Neither would his mouth, he found out seconds later. He had no choice but to stare at his worst enemy, wide eyed and defenseless.

"That pressure on your head, I know you feel it." Dan smirked. "I know what it is. It's me, or should I say, you. And to make that pressure go away all you have to do is let it in, let the darkness in. Can you do that, Danny? Will you do that, Danny? I know you will and once you do," He chuckled, "You'll never want to go back."

Danny awoke in a cold, damp sweat._ It was just a dream_, he thought. But fear gripped him and he quickly dropped that idea. It felt too real to be a dream. He put a hand on his head. That pressure was gone. Danny felt grateful for that.

Danny looked out his window to see that it was daytime. Sunlight was barely peeking through the grey clouds and leaves fluttered in the wind. Danny wondered why it was so... peaceful. It really did seem like any other day. But he knew it wasn't. What was Dan planning? He needed to know.

6. Chapter 6

When Danny got up to get ready for school, one glance at his clock showed him that it was 9:17 in the morning. He was late! He was so late, he should've been at school two hours ago. Danny ran to the bathroom to get ready but when he got there, he saw a note taped to the mirror.

_Danny,
>I turned off your alarm and told Mom and Dad you were feeling sick, and to not disturb you. You deserve the rest.
-Jazz_

Danny relaxed. He couldn't help the half smile that tugged at his lips. He really did have a great sister. Since he was in the bathroom, he decided to brush his teeth anyway. When Danny got back to his room, he changed out of his pajamas and grabbed his phone, he thought some fresh air might do him some good. Though he kept telling himself it was just to clear his mind, he secretly hoped he would run into Dan just to get it over with.

As Danny flew through the air, he passed the Nasty Burger. Memories

of everyone he held dear dying right in front of him resurfaced. He wasn't... He wasn't going to let that happen again. He put those memories in the back of his mind and carried on.

When Danny reached the park, he found it to be empty. A rarity he found out after visiting it so many times. Danny found a branch to sit on and basked in the silence as he let himself think. His mind went back to the same thought he had days ago. Where were all the ghosts? There hasn't been a single ghost attack in days. Danny felt his stomach drop. Has Dan, perhaps, eliminated all of them? Such a thought made Danny want to encounter Dan again as soon as possible even more but at the same time, avoid him at all costs. He closed his eyes and lay his head on the tree trunk. For all of about four seconds. To the left of Danny, he heard a rustle in the leaves. The rustle not of the wind, but of someone or something walking through them. Danny was on high alert. He figured out long ago that no sound was just nothing. In the same direction the sound came again but when Danny looked, he saw nothing. He didn't rest, instead he made his way to the source of the sound. But as he approached, still, nothing. Danny finally sighed. It must be his paranoia again.

"Hello, Danny." Danny spun around. "Enjoy your dream last night? I certainly did."

"How did you?"

Dan chuckled. "Are you really that dull? Was I really that dull? We're the same, so we're connected. I can enter your mind at will but," He smirked. "You can't enter mine."

Danny had enough. He shot an ecto-blast straight at Dan's head. Dan dodged it with ease. "You've gotten sloppy since our last battle!" Dan shouted.

Of course I've gotten sloppy. Danny thought, _you hit me in the head the last time we fought._ Danny did not voice any of his thoughts. He did not want to give Dan the satisfaction.

Dan threw his own shot at Danny, then another, both of which hit Danny square in the chest. Danny was shot back and hit the tree he was only recently sitting upon. He squeezed his eyes together in pain. He hit his head exactly where it was healing. Through his blurred vision, he saw Dan tough the ground and walk over to him, leaning in close. "Everyone you love is going to die. Just you wait."

Danny closed his eyes.

* * *

><p>Jazz had arrived home to find that Danny was not there. Where is he? She wondered after she finished searching the house. The only evidence that he had been there at all was that her note to him was no longer in the bathroom but now in his room. She called him twice. Each time, no answer. She decided to call Sam and Tucker instead. Perhaps he was with them. The second they picked up, Jazz asked, "Is Danny with either of you?"

"He's not with me." Sam said.

"Me neither." Said Tucker. Both he and Sam knew why Danny wasn't at school, Jazz had told them earlier. So the fact that Danny was not at home was worrying.

Jazz sighed in frustration but then she had an idea. "Tucker, can you track Danny's phone with your PDA?"

"Already on it." Said Tucker, pulling out his PDA and getting to work. "He's at the park." Tucker informed when he got a ping. The three of them hung up and headed out to the park.

They met up at about the same time and set out searching. "Danny!" One of them would call every once in a while.

As they searched the park, Sam noticed a faint glow coming from the wooded area. "Danny?" She breathed, running in that direction. Tucker and Jazz followed suit. The glow, much to their relief, was in fact Danny. But the celebration was short lived. Danny was laying on the ground, propped up against the tree, still in his Phantom form. The back of his head was bleeding where the old wound was now reopened. Seeing he was unconscious, Jazz bent down to pick him up, intending to carry him back to her car.

But as she reached down, Tucker yelled, "Look out!" And pushed her out of the way just as an ecto-blast when flying passed where her head previously was. Jazz looked back down at Danny to see, much to her surprise, he was conscious.

"Danny?" Sam knelt down in front of him. Danny lifted his hand, intent of shooting another Ecto-blast, but he just wasn't strong enough. Tucker and Jazz held down his arms and he was too tired to fight back. "It's us, Danny." Sam said, staring straight into his lidded eyes. "It's Jazz, Tucker, and Sam."

Sam noticed Danny's eyebrows raise slightly in recognition. "S-sorry." He choked out. It was quiet, almost a whisper, but more raspy. As Danny's eyes shut, he changed back to normal, the only indication they needed that he finally fell unconscious.

7. Chapter 7

Danny's wounds were extensive. The three of them desperately wanted to take him to the hospital but they knew if they did, he would not forgive them. There was also the potential of Danny getting his blood drawn and if the doctors saw what was mixed in with his blood, well, it would not be a good thing. So, against the trio's better judgement, they took Danny home. They were thankful when they arrived and found that Jack and Maddie were not there. They were not in the mood to come up with a distraction to get Danny up the stairs. To their surprise, getting Danny up the stairs was one of the easier parts. He was lighter than he looked so it was easy to carry him.

Tucker and Sam brought Danny to his room while Jazz went to the bathroom to get a wet towel. She came back in time to see them removing Danny's shoes and placing his blanket over him. Jazz walked to Danny and placed the wet rag on his head wound. The only reason it was not bleeding anymore was because the blood around it had finally dried. "I told you to get some rest. Why don't you ever listen to

me?" Jazz whispered.

"Well, we all know how stubborn he can be." Sam pointed out ruefully. Everyone nodded in agreement. There wasn't much said after that, just silence, the only sound being Danny's rasping breathing.

Danny awoke abruptly three hours later. His mind was working on hyper drive so, needless to say, he was a mess. He jumped out of bed and looked left and right, trying to grasp his surroundings. Nearest to him was Tucker, who hopped out of his seat to stop Danny. In his spree, Danny didn't recognize Tucker at first. There was but one thing running through his mind: survive. So, Danny tried to throw a poorly aimed punch at Tucker. Sam jumped from her seat and, in a surprise attack, pinned Danny's arms behind his back. "Calm down, Danny." She said into his ear.

Tucker put his hands up in surrender. "Yeah, man, we're not going to hurt you."

Danny looked between Jazz, who was to his right, and Tucker. He calmed down, practically going slack in Sam's arms. Sam set him back on his bed and when she did, she got a good look of his face. One thing was perfectly clear when she saw him, he was completely unbalanced.

Danny put his hands on his head and stared at the floor. "I'mâ€¦ he'sâ€¦ I don'tâ€¦" He could not form one coherent sentence. It was actually quite unnerving.

Danny was shaking, Jazz put his blanket over his shoulders in hopes of calming him down. "It's okay, Danny. Try not to say anything." The way Danny looked, and how he was acting, it was breaking her heart.

Danny grabbed the blanket with both hands and wrapped it around himself. He knew he needed to calm down, but the side of him that was overflowing with anxiety was winning. "I'm going to turn into him and you're all gonna die." He said, his brain disconnected with his mouth. Danny didn't mean to say those thoughts out loud. He wished he could take it back.

"No, you're not, Danny. You're not going to turn into him and we're going to be fine." Sam stated.

"How do you know!?" Danny snapped. "Look at me, he's stronger and I can't beat him!"

Sam remained calm. "This time is different, this time you have us. We'll help you beat this. We'll help you beat him."

Danny closed his eyes and sighed. He did his best to calm himself down, taking several deep breaths. When was done, he looked up at Sam. "You're right. It's just, how? I have no idea what to do." He looked out his window, it was starting to get dark. The sun was setting, barely peeking through the buildings. "It's getting late, you guys should probably be getting home." He smiled up at his friends. "Thanks for being here, guys."

Tucker waved his hand dismissively. "Don't sweat it, dude. We'll always be there when you get knocked down."

"Yeah, don't ever think you're a burden." Sam said. She waved, "We'll see you tomorrow." She and Tucker left. Jazz and Danny were alone now.

"We'll get through this, Danny. Just give it time." Jazz said.

Danny shook his head. "That's what I keep telling myself every day."

"What do you mean by that?" Jazz tilted her head.

"Don't get me wrong, I love being Danny Phantom, it's just..." He trailed off.

"Just what?"

"Sometimes I feel like it's all that I am and all that I'll ever be. Even when I finish school and graduate. I'll still be stuck here doing the same thing until I die." He looked up at Jazz. "There are so many other things I want to do and I feel like I'll never accomplish them."

Jazz smiled. "Just because you have super powers, doesn't mean you'll always be a super hero. This is your life, Danny. Do what you want with it." She gestured to the window. "There'll always be some kind of ghost hunter in Amity Park, even if they aren't as good as you." She winked. "Even if most of them are idiots."

Danny chuckled and looked at his sister gratefully. "Thanks, sis."

"Anytime, little brother."

8. Chapter 8

The next day while Jazz went to school and his parents were out at a convention for the week, Danny had the house to himself. This was the day he was going to think logically on how to beat Dan. He couldn't be freaking out anymore, he couldn't have his friends and sister coming to his rescue anymore. He needed to be prepared.

Danny, after having some well-deserved breakfast, went down to his parents' lab. Just like last time Dan was here, there must be some kind of ghost weapon to help in his demise. But as Danny searched through invention after invention, his mind drifted to Dan's motives. Why hasn't he done something drastic yet? What kind of game was he playing? Danny didn't know, and all this thinking was hurting his wounded head. He pulled out the Ghost Gauntlets and Specter Deflector and studied them. Dan was obviously stronger now, so these would only hurt him for a mere moment. Maybe they would work if Danny upgraded them? He set them aside for later.

Danny looked over at the ghost portal, he thought of going to ask Clockwork how Dan escaped, and more importantly, how to defeat him. But he thought against it. Who knew what state Clockwork could be in right now? The last thing he needed was Danny, of all ghosts, to come waltzing in unannounced. So, Danny shook the thought away and got back to searching.

After a while, and not finding anything else of use, Danny set to work on trying to upgrade the things he did find. As he worked on the inventions, his mind fell upon the idea of what if he couldn't beat Dan? The thought made him shiver. He's always beaten the bad guys, but what if this time his luck finally ran out? No. He couldn't think like that. He had people depending on him and he couldn't let them down, he couldn't let them die... he couldn't. It just wasn't an option. Danny felt a new determination as he set back to work. He would beat Dan. He wouldn't turn evil. His luck wouldn't run out. And most importantly, the ones he loved wouldn't perish. He felt a smile tug at his lips. He would beat him, he felt it in his core.

* * *

><p>"Danny!" Danny was ripped from concentration by Jazz.<p>

"I'm down here!" He called back.

Danny heard footsteps begin to descend down the stairs. When Jazz got to the bottom, he could see the look of relief on her face; she had been worried about him. Jazz smiled when she saw that Danny was in a better mood. "Have you been down here the whole day?" She asked. Danny, who was concentrated again, simply nodded. "What are you working on?"

Danny gestured to the weapons. "I'm giving them an upgrade. I can't beat him with just my powers alone and these can't beat him by themselves, so if I modify them and use them to combine with my power, I'm sure to beat him. If anything, have a fighting chance."

Jazz was proud. Not only had Danny gotten out of his anxiety and paranoia, but he had managed to think of a way to beat his evil counterpart. "That's amazing, Danny! I knew you could do it." She glanced at the invention approvingly then back at Danny. "Is there anything you need help with?"

Danny shook his head. "I've got it, but thanks for offering."

Seeing Danny so focused, a thought occurred to her. "Have you eaten at all today?"

Danny froze awkwardly. "Uhâ€¦ I had breakfast."

"Breakfast," Jazz repeated. "That was hours ago. I'm going to make you something and you're going to eat it. Got it?" She said in her stern, older sister voice.

"Got it."

Jazz, who was pretty hungry herself, went upstairs to start dinner. Danny shook his head. He really did have the world's greatest sister.

Forty-five minutes later and a set of almost complete gauntlets, Danny was feeling pretty good about himselfâ€¦

"Hello, Danny."

Danny spun around. "You!" He yelled, voice licked with new found fury. He didn't hesitate to shoot an ecto-blast at Dan. He changed into Danny Phantom. "How many times are you going to appear with no reason for showing up?"

Dan smirked. "As many times as it takes, Danny."

"What's that supposed to mean!?" He seethed. Danny put on the gauntlets and didn't wait for an answer as he took a shot.

Glass shattered on the floor, Danny looked to the source. There stood Jazz, a broken plate in front of her, shock and... Something else on her face. "Jazz, get out of here!" Danny yelled. She didn't move. Confusion. That was the other look on her face. Why would there be confusion? Danny shook his head. There was no time for such a thought, Jazz needed to get out of here.

Danny was forcefully knocked from his thought by an ecto-blast from Dan. Danny quickly recomposed himself and shot another blast. Just like the first time, he missed.

"Danny."

Danny didn't hear Jazz. He was too busy fighting a once again losing battle.

"Danny." Jazz repeated. Her voice remained steady, calm. Danny heard her that time. Why was she so calm right now? She needed to run.

"Danny!" Jazz finally shouted. Because she needed to. Because she absolutely needed to get his attention.

Danny finally gave in. "This really isn't a good time right now!" He bellowed, shooting another blast.

Jazz looked around the room then back at her brother. "But, Danny, there's no one else here."

9. Chapter 9

In that moment everything stopped. In that moment Danny stopped hearing the outside world. In that moment he landed back to the ground with unnatural grace. His brain was still trying to comprehend the sounds that fell upon his ears.

His sister. Jazz. She told him something. That something was probably one the most important things she's ever told him. Think back. What did she say?

No one.

There's no one else here.

What did she mean there was no one else here, there was just... Danny looked up at the ceiling. No. No there wasn't just. Nothing was there.

But there was. There was someone else here! There had to be. Because

if there wasn't then... There just had to be.

Danny vaguely felt the rings engulf him as he changed back to normal. He fell to his knees as the rest of his senses lost comprehension to the outside world. He didn't pass out. No. It was more of a conscious coma.

Jazz ran to her brother's aid as she said words to try and snap him out of his trance. It was imperative that she did because if she didn't... well, he might just slip away from her for good and she knew that.

"Danny."

Foggy. The sound was foggy. Was it a voice? He had to dwell on this thought for a moment before deciding that yes, it was a voice. What was it saying though? He felt it was something he needed to know.

"Danny."

Dan? No. No, it can't be him! It justâ€¦ wait. The voice isn't saying Dan. It's saying...

"Danny!"

Danny's head snapped up. "Jazz?"

Jazz let out a strained, joyous breath. "Yes. It's Jazz. It's me."

Danny reached out and hugged her. "Jazz. Jazz, I'm s -"

"Nothing to be sorry for, little brother." She said, shaking her head. She let him go. "I'm just glad you're back on Earth."

Danny nodded and looked around the scorched lab. "None of those are from him."

"No, none of those are from him."

Danny looked down at himself, then why was he aching? "But I felt him attack me over and over again." He looked up at his sister. "Why?"

Jazz truly and honestly didn't have an answer to that question. "Why don't you get cleaned up and into bed for now? I'll clean up this mess. Sound like a plan?" Danny was drifting again, she grabbed his chin to focus his attention. "Sound like a plan?" Danny nodded this time. "Okay, then, shout if you need something." She watched as Danny stood up and walked up the stairs.

Needless to say, Jazz was scared and worried and confused. These weren't things she was used to feeling, so she tried her best to ignore them as she began to clean the lab.

Danny walked upstairs to his room. Much like a robot, Danny's brain processed Jazz's command and followed it exactly as she told, doing nothing but that. He was no longer drifting, he simply was not thinking. And if it wasn't something his body did naturally, he would

not be breathing.

Danny went to the bathroom to wash his face then went to his room to put on his pajamas, then went to bed. He fell asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow, if not before. When he slept, he did not dream. He did not move around in bed nor did he even drool on his pillow. He lay perfectly still. His body was not tired but his mind was exhausted.

Meanwhile, back downstairs, Jazz finished cleaning the lab. She went back upstairs and sat at the table, intent on eating the dinner she made. But when she was about to take a bite, she finally lost it. She broke down sobbing, crying. There's only so much stress and worry someone can take before they've had their limit. This was hers.

10. Chapter 10

Danny slept for two whole days. In that time, Jazz called over Sam and Tucker to tell them what happened. This was not something she could tell them over the phone.

"Soâ€|" Tucker began. "All this time, Dan's return was just a hallucination?"

Jazz nodded numbly. She was a mess. She had decided to take the rest of the week off from school and she had barely left Danny's side in that time.

"Butâ€|" Sam said. "Those were, are, real wounds on him."

Jazz nodded again. Silence fell over the table. "I don't want to do this," Jazz hesitated. "Butâ€| I think I should tell my parents. About Danny being half ghost. So they can try and find a cure."

Sam slammed her hand on the table. "That is not an option. Danny would never, ever forgive us if we did that." She snapped.

Jazz stood abruptly from her chair. "I'd rather he hate us and be okay than love us and suffering."

"He's our friend, he would never -"

"Well, he's my brother!" Jazz yelled. "You have no idea what that means! It's my job to look out for him, to do what's good for him even if he doesn't like it! Even having him go out fighting on a normal day makes my stomach churn. But I know he can hold his own so I let him! Yes, you may be his friends but you two will never know what it's like to worry about him like a younger sibling!" Jazz stormed out of the room. "You two can come back tomorrow." She grumbled as she left.

Tucker open his mouth to speak. "Don't." Sam held up a hand, interrupting whatever he was going to say. "Let's just go."

* * *

><p>The minute Jazz left the kitchen she felt guilty about what she said. She knew Sam also had Danny's best interest in mind and she

should have realized that. But Jazz was just so done. She felt exhausted. She wanted Danny to be okay so bad but she just didn't know what to do. Sam was right. It was foolish of her to even think about telling her parents the truth. Jazz went back upstairs and retook her place right next to Danny. She stared at his unmoving form. "Please, wake up. Wake up and be okay." He didn't wake up. Miserably, Jazz grabbed Danny's hand and held it between hers.<p>

_What will Mom and Dad do if they come home and he's still not awake? _Jazz tried not to think about it. Instead, she tried to think back to when this all started. When did it all start? Waitâ€| Jazz knew.

It all started at Vlad's.

Not very often would Jazz say she lost her temper. But in this moment, Jazz would later wonder if that was her origin story to evil. How dare he? How dare Vlad do this to Danny? She knew. She _knew_. Vlad was the one to do this, whether he continued to play dumb or not. Jazz would have hopped in the Specter Speeder right then and there and gone to Vlad's to make him pay, but then she remembered Danny's hand in hers, and she realized she could not go anywhere until he woke up. Jazz leaned back in her seat. "He'll pay for what he did."

* * *

><p>When Sam and Tucker left, Tucker assumed Sam wanted to be alone. But when he attempted to walk the opposite direction as her, she stopped him. "Wait," Sam said hesitantly. "Let's go to the Nasty Burger."<p>

"All right." Tucker replied. He could tell Sam felt guilty about what she said.

When they got to the Nasty Burger, Sam got a veggie burger and Tucker got a double bacon cheese burger. Sam was silent. Eerily so. She always had something to say about this place and what it does to the environment but this time, nothing. Tucker sighed and put down his burger. "Jazz is a forgiving person. She's not going to be mad at you forever. We're all just on edge and I'm sure she understands that, just like I know you do."

"I hope you're right." Sam mumbled, she looked up at Tucker. "If all of this ends, do you think things will go back to the way they were before?"

Tucker didn't know how to answer that, because he had been thinking the same thing. What was going to happen to Danny when this was all over? "I don't know. But we have to at least hope it will. All of this happened so suddenly and we didn't have enough time to prepare for it. The least we can do is hope everything will go back to normal in the end."

Sam stared at Tucker. He's remained so composed through this whole thing and Sam didn't understand how. Especially since he's known Danny longer than she has. "How have you been so calm through all of this?"

"It hasn't been easy. It's the hardest thing I've ever had to do in fact. Danny and I have known each other forever." Tucker stared at his drink in his hand. "I'm just trying to think about what Danny would do if it was one of us in his situation."

Sam lay her head on the table. "When did this even happen?"

Tucker knew she wasn't expecting an answer but it was a valid question. He thought back. Oh. "Vlad."

"What?" Sam lifted her head.

Tucker was scowling. "It all started when he went to Vlad's."

"That's right!" Sam exclaimed. "Danny said nothing happened but maybe Vlad did something without Danny realizing it. We have to tell Jazz."

Tucker agreed. "Let's go." Tucker and Sam got up and left, throwing away their food on the way out.

11. Chapter 11

When Sam and Tucker arrived back at Danny's house, they didn't even bother knocking as they let themselves inside. "Jazz!" Sam yelled at the bottom of the stairs. "Jazz, we have some news!"

Jazz, for her part, jumped in surprise. She was not expecting anyone in the house, especially Sam, whom she thought was still angry with her. Jazz left Danny's side and walked to the top of the stairwell where she saw Sam and Tucker standing there anxiously. "Tucker? Sam? What are you two doing back? Not that I'm not glad to see you. Sam, I'm s -"

Sam held up a hand. "I should be the one apologizing. I'm sorry, I really am, but we can make up later. Tucker and I think we figured out a way to help Danny."

Jazz smiled, running down the stairs. "That's perfect. I've thought of a way we might be able to help Danny too."

"Then I want to hear it as well."

Sam, Tucker, and Jazz looked to the top of the stairs, where Danny was leaning against the wall, awake. "Danny!" They yelled.

Danny smiled meekly. "Hey, guys."

Tucker walked up the stairs to help Danny down since he looked worse for wear. "You had us scared half to death, dude." Tucker said, putting Danny's arm around his shoulder. "Give us a warning next time you decided to sleep for two days."

"Two days!?" Danny exclaimed. "You're joking, right?"

"Wish we were." Sam said. "Mr. Lancer's been throwing a fit at your absences."

"Fantastic." Danny groaned.

The four of them found themselves at the kitchen table and Danny had taken an apple to eat since he was starving. "So," Sam began. "What were you thinking, Jazz?"

"Well," Jazz said. "This all started when we went to Vlad's. It has to be his doing."

Danny shook his head. "I want to think so too but the entire time we were there, nothing happened."

"But something did happen, Danny." Jazz objected. "You started hearing things that aren't there."

Tucker nodded. "Sam and I were thinking, Vlad can be pretty slick when he wants to be. He could've done something without you knowing."

Danny sighed. "But what then?"

"I find it amusing how desperate you are to find a cure that simply doesn't exist."

Danny jumped from his seat and charged an ecto-blast in his hand. "Danny!" Jazz yelled.

"Please tell me you see him." Danny responded, not taking his eyes off of Dan for a second.

Sam, Tucker, and Jazz all looked where Danny was staring. "I'm sorry, Danny. But there's no one else there." Tucker frowned.

Danny let the ecto-blast disperse but he didn't move. "You're not real." He growled.

Dan laughed. "If that's what makes you sleep at night, go ahead and think that. But, Danny, I simply have a new power, you see." He flew behind Jazz. "If I don't want someone to see me, they won't. If I do want someone to see me, they will. Resist as much as you can but when you're at your lowest, and everyone has given up on your sanity, then you will have no choice but to turn into me. I'm still here, aren't I?"

Danny felt his mouth go dry. Once again the words rang in his head. _I'm still here. I still exist. Which means you still turn into me._ "That'sâ€¦ that's not true. You're not real." His voice betrayed the confidence he was hoping to exude.

"What's he saying?" Sam asked. Danny glanced at her then back at Dan but when he did, he was gone. Danny took several deep breaths then sat back down. Danny knew he couldn't be panicking anymore. He just couldn't. It wasn't helping the situation.

"He's gone now. He said he has a new power. He said if he doesn't want you guys to see him, then you can't see him. But if he wants me to see him, then I'll see him." Danny closed his eyes and took another deep breath. _Stay calm. Stay calm. Stay calm._

"What's the point in doing that?" Tucker questioned.

Danny stared at the wall straight ahead of him. "He said that when I'm at my lowest, and everyone has given up on my sanity, then I'll have no choice but to turn into him." Danny began fidgeting with his hands. "I don't know what's real and what isn't anymore." Sam jolted Danny out of his thoughts. Much like earlier, she slammed her hand down on the table.

"That's it," She gritted. "There's only one way to know if this is real or not."

"What?" Danny asked weakly.

"Clockwork." Sam replied.

"Of course!" Tucker exclaimed. "Clockwork would know."

"Clockwork?" Jazz questioned.

"That's right!" Tucker realized. "You weren't there."

Jazz had no idea what they were going on about. Was Clockwork one of their enemies? "There for what?" Danny remained silent as Sam and Tucker recalled their experience with Clockwork.

"We took off our medallions and after that, we were returned to our time." Sam said. "Danny came a few minutes later after he defeated his future self and that was the last we heard of Clockwork orâ€¦| Danâ€¦|" She trailed off.

Tucker seemed to catch onto Sam's confusion too after a moment. The two looked at Danny. "You said that you defeated your future self easily and prevented the Nasty Burger explosion." Tucker said.

Sam nodded. "That was a feat even for you, that guy was scary, you never told us how you did that."

Danny felt his stomach drop. "I never said any of those things." It was in that moment that Danny realized he never told them what had actually happened. He just wanted to bury such a memory away so he never brought it up. It was about time he did. "The battle didn't end there." Danny went into a very in depth explanation on what happened after Sam and Tucker went back to the present, all the way to the part where they died and Clockwork saved them.

"Thatâ€¦|" Sam started after the story was done. "Was not what I was expecting."

"Soâ€¦|" Tucker said. "If it weren't for Clockworkâ€¦| we would all be dead?"

The image of all of them dying entered Danny's mind again.
"Yes."

12. Chapter 12

While Danny took a shower since he hasn't taken one in over two days, Jazz, Sam, and Tucker were in the basement, thinking of a plan. "Do you two know where we would even find Clockwork?" Jazz asked.

"We don't know." Tucker said. "But I bet Danny would know where to find him."

Jazz bit her lip. "Do you think it's really a good idea bringing Danny into the Ghost Zone the way he is now? I really don't think he should be fighting."

"I agree," Sam said. "But Danny's the best chance we have at finding Clockwork. Besides," She said. "Even without powers we're still super kick butt. If a ghost attacks us, we'll handle it."

"I guess you're right." Jazz nodded.

Tucker rubbed his hands together. "So, let's think of a plan and gather all the weapons we might need." Sam and Jazz agreed, so they set to work. Danny came downstairs some ten minutes later with fresh clothes and wet hair. He raised an eyebrow.

"What's with all the weapons? You guys are acting like we're going on a long-term mission. We're just going to Clockwork then coming back."

"Yeah but you can't use your powers." Jazz said, packing a bazooka, which Danny thought was quite excessive for a short trip.

Danny held up an ecto-blast in his hand. "I can use my powers."

Sam shook her head. "She means we're not letting you use your powers."

"Why?" Danny questioned, a bit offended.

"Because, Danny," Jazz said. "We don't think you should be fighting in -"

"In what?" Danny scowled. "In my state of mind? I'm too crazy? You think I might go rouge?" In hindsight, Danny knew they probably weren't thinking that. But he felt betrayed that they thought he couldn't take care of himself.

"No, Danny," Tucker stepped in. "That's not what we're saying."

Danny was about to retaliate but instead he sighed. He was getting angry for no reason. He was arguing for the sake of it, and there was no point. "Sorry," He apologized. "You guys are probably right. Let's just finish packing the last of the Specter Speeder and get going."

"Get going to where, Danny? Clockwork? He was the first one I killed after escaping that abysmal prison."

"Yeah," Danny said. "There's only one way to find out. Now, if you're not going to attack me, then go away." He demanded.

"You should probably take a look at your acquaintances in the room. I may not attack you, Danny, but it seems as though talking to you is doing the same effect." Dan disappeared. Danny looked at Jazz, Tucker, and Sam who were staring at him wide eyed and baited.

"Let's just go." Danny grumbled, hopping into the passenger seat of the Spector Speeder. And so they did. Sam and Tucker sat in the back seat and Jazz drove.

It turned out they didn't need even one of the ghost weapons. The Ghost Zone seemed to be vacant. Floating doors and islands adorned the space around them but no signs of life were anywhere. Danny pointed Jazz in the correct direction to go. It was eerie to see the Ghost Zone so empty. "Do you think Clockwork will even be there when we get there?" Sam asked what was on everyone's minds.

"We have to hope so." Danny said pointing Jazz to the correct course to go. But despite the hope he was so desperately trying to hold on to, previous thoughts from days before came back to him. Did Dan kill all the ghosts in the Ghost Zone? Danny felt himself shiver. They found themselves arriving at Clockwork's soon after. Jazz parked the vehicle at the edge of the island and they all got out. Clockwork was at the end of the room, examining the screens in front of him.

"I've been expecting you." He turned to face them, changing from child to adult. "But then, I expect everything."

Danny stood straight. "Then you know what we're going to ask you?" Sam, Tucker, and Jazz noticed in Danny's posture the respect he held and felt they should act the same.

Clockwork flew toward him, changing from adult to elder. "Of course I do. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't ask anyway."

Danny knew that no matter how long he lived, he would never fully understand Clockwork. He would never understand how he worked. "Has my future self actually returned or am I just going crazy?"

Clockwork changed from elder into child. "You are not going crazy." Danny felt his stomach drop. "But," Clockwork continued. "Your future self has not returned either."

"What?" Danny asked.

End
file.